

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, June 5, 1899, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Beinn Bhreagh, C. B. June 5th, 1899. My dear little wifie:

I have just been reading one or two of your recent letters and take up my pen a second time.

I think it would be better for you and Elsie and Daisy to come here for the summer for reasons of health and strength — and decide here what to do in the Autumn. I don't like the idea of all going to Europe without me — but I would prefer that to giving up my laboratory work here — this summer. If my presence can be of service in bringing them into contact with the permanent people of Europe — think how much more valuable my presence would be — if I could bring out at the same time — scientific results of great value to the world relating to aerodromics. I can't possibly do this if my experiments are constantly interrupted. I will not give up — but every break means a year's interregnum. My gravitation thoughts will never be completed — and what I do in that will be a posthumous constitution to science. The method of research is already in black and white with some of the results obtained and three type-written copies are in existence — so that is safe — so far as it goes — even though I should advance the subject no further. I cannot carry it on much further alone — as my eyes have given out — and I feel that the strain is too great for me to work at these curves as laboriously as I have done in the past — without the assistance of younger eyes — and brains.

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A dozen men — or a hundred men for that matter — would not advance my researches here much faster. Time and continuity of experiments are what are needed.

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You must remember that this is not a question of Invention but Discovery — and discovery is groping if you will — a slow, laborious systematic groping after knowledge — disheartening, in the number of blind alleys explored — and yet this process of groping, carefully, and systematically, all round, in every direction, must lead at last to full knowledge and the discovery of the true path.

No man, who has not tackled a difficult subject by himself, can understand how much discouraging and disheartening work is necessary in order to achieve success. I begin to appreciate and understand the wonderful labors of Prof. Langley, in producing his Memoir “Experiments in Aerodynamics.” As I have been going over substantially similar ground in the past — I begin to understand his figures and illustrations better — and the important nature of the results achieved. I want too, to bring my experiments to a conclusion — and can do so here — if let alone. Then will come the work of invention , and then will be the time when I can follow your suggestion — of half a dozen men or more in my laboratory instead of two. But now — I could not tell them what to do.

Your loving, Alec.